CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND FORTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 27 March 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Ebeka Ayo Azikiwe (Nigeria)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 546th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I wish to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Conference to the Ambassador for Disarmament of Canada, Her Excellency Margaret Mason, who is at present following this plenary meeting. I wish Her Excellency a successful mission in Geneva, where she is consulting on various disarmament issues falling under her responsibility.

In conformity with its programme of work, the Conference continues today its consideration of agenda item 4, "Chemical weapons". In accordance with rule 30 of its rules of procedure, however, any member wishing to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

I have on my list of speakers today the representative of Japan, Ambassador Donowaki, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. DONOWAKI (Japan): Since this happens to be my first intervention at a plenary session of this Conference, allow me first of all to express my sincere appreciation for all the very warm words of welcome addressed to me to my senior colleagues around this table in this historic and magnificent conference room. As a newcomer, I pledge to do my best in co-operating with our colleagues and friends here in an endeavour to achieve higher goals in the field of arms control and disarmament.

May I also take this opportunity to join with preceding speakers in congratulating you, Mr. President, for the excellent leadership you are demonstrating in presiding over our work. At the beginning of this month, we had the pleasure of having the honourable Minister of External Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Dr. Luxman, address this Conference, and I felt proud about the great nation of Africa where I had the privilege of serving as Japanese Ambassador until recently. Foreign Minister Luxman reaffirmed in unequivocal terms Nigeria's willingness to abide by its commitment and dedication to the cause of peace and security of the world just as it has over the years. In particular, the reference made by the Minister to the abiding faith Nigeria has in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons deserves wide and serious attention, in view of the upcoming fourth review conference of the Treaty later this year.

Before moving on to the main subject of my intervention, I also wish to express appreciation to the previous Presidents of the Conference, Ambassadors Benhima of Morocco and Nagelkerke of the Netherlands, for the enormous contribution they made in helping all of us to start smoothly this year's session of the Conference. My delegation also wishes to extend a whole-hearted welcome to Ambassador Margaret Mason of Canada today.

Listening to a number of eminent speakers and colleagues who took the floor before me, I was very encouraged and pleased to find myself among those

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body begins to produce concrete achievements, at this historic juncture of unmatched opportunities for arms control and disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament may be regarded as an inadequate body in carrying out the tasks entrusted to it.

It is only right at this point to refer to the very inspiring speech made by our eminent, esteemed and beloved colleague from Brazil, Ambassador de Azambuja, at the very outset of our Conference this year. In his speech he eloquently but painfully pointed out our failure so far to produce concrete achievements while super-Power bilateral and European regional East-West disarmament negotiations are harvesting unexpectedly rewarding results. He asked how our Conference, which is both structurally and conceptually a child of the cold war, can adapt to the new times.

Indeed, if the East-West confrontation is to be transformed into a kind of co-operation which will no doubt contribute to the stability and peace of the world, it is obvious that the existing grouping set-up in our Conference is bound to become obsolete. How to adapt ourselves is certainly not an easy question, but it may be time for us to begin to address ourselves to this question. Meanwhile, as for the substance of our work - although this is not an answer to the question posed by our eminent Brazilian colleague - I should like to share with you a way of looking at the things taking place in our multilateral negotiating body.

The chemical weapons convention, after so many years' hard work in this forum, is approaching completetion, and Japan takes the strong view that this year should indeed become a critical year in settling remaining major substantive issues for negotiation, as was declared at the Canberra Conference last September.

When we reflect upon various factors which may have led us to the present fairly successful outlook, it should be noted that the sound progress of our negotiations owes much to the two successful meetings held to promote a total ban on chemical weapons, in Paris and Canberra. We should also pay due regard to the bold steps taken by the United States and the USSR in declaring their chemical weapons stocks, accepting the principle of on-site instrusive inspections as a means of verification, and, most recently, announcing their readiness to destroy the bulk of their stocks down to equal low levels, pending the adoption of the international convention. An agreement to this effect is expected to be signed at the United States-Soviet summit meeting in June this year.

My delegation also supports the strong appeal made by the United States to all CW-capable States to follow the United States and the USSR in declaring basic data concerning their CW stocks as early as possible, because by so doing in the spirit of more transparency and mutual confidence-building we should be able to better secure the universality and success of the CW convention.

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decade, which may belong to a new era, and our Conference on Disarmament may establish its position as a forum which, after a long period of inability to carry out its tasks, is now being activated to serve the requirements of the new times.

Allow me to make a few more observations on this very important negotiation we are engaged in as a matter of highest priority at this moment. Japan believes that it is time for us now to pay more attention to tackling the key issues of a political nature, renewing our political commitment to the elimination of chemical weapons. Then, for the remaining technical questions, active participation by experts from industrial and academic circles will serve as a lever for acceleration of the negotiation.

As one of the major chemical industry nations, Japan wishes to reiterate the importance of the verification régime with respect to non-production of chemical weapons. The verification of destruction may be over in 10 years after the entry into force of the convention, but the verification of non-production will last indefinitely and affect a far greater number of States. In this field, we are trying to create a truly epoch-making mechanism which may serve as a model for future disarmament conventions. In working out a verification régime for non-production, we will have to respond to the need to ensure the fulfilment of the purposes of this convention, and at the same time the requirement of keeping the cost of verification down to a reasonably low level. In order to work out such a régime of verification that would be reasonably effective and reliable, it is extremely important to try to have a fairly accurate picture of the chemical industry situation prior to the conclusion of this convention. From this point of view, Japan hopes that under the recently proposed system of "technical support" for the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee, a data base on the chemical industry will be worked out as one of its activities. About one week ago, Japan presented the Ad hoc Committee with data on its chemical industry, and hopes that this will contribute to the deliberations by the Committee on such problems as the cost of verification, answers to article VI, production thresholds and so forth.

Furthermore, my delegation wishes to reaffirm Japan's hope that its technologies might make some contributions to the resolution of difficult problems related to the CW convention, such as that of effective verification. As an example of such efforts, my delegation wishes to draw the attention of the Conference to the United States-Japanese agreement reached in Washington on 7 March under which the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the Japan Atomic Energy Research Institute will work together in an experiment to test the reliability of remotely monitored sensors which operate unattended for long periods of time.

Now I should like to address myself to another important subject of my intervention today. Many questions are asked as to the adequacy of the Conference on Disarmament in adapting itself to the requirements of the new times. As I suggested at the beginning of my speech, it may well be that the recent encouraging developments in the East-West relationship have made it

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possible for the Conference to achieve major breakthroughs in the CW negotiations. In that case, we should try hard to achieve other breakthroughs in other long-standing issues before the Conference, thus turning this forum into a real working body serving the requirements of the new times.

Of course, what I have in mind are the issues of nuclear disarmament. Our colleague from Peru, Ambassador de Rivero, was so right in his speech on 13 February at this plenary session in pointing out that the reactivation of the ad hoc committee on the cessation of nuclear tests would "give the work of the Conference political symmetry". With respect to both nuclear and chemical weapons the two super-Powers are the largest possessors, and their reduction and ultimate elimination, as well as non-proliferation, are matters of great importance today not only to the two super-Powers but also to the entire world community. Thus, multilateral negotiations are closely linked to bilateral negotiations. Furthermore, as in the case of chemical weapons, advance in the dialogue and a co-operative relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union in recent years have made it possible to achieve significant breakthroughs in their bilateral talks in the field of nuclear disarmament. Japan whole-heartedly welcomes these developments, and is convinced that they are bound to be reflected in multilateral negotiations here in this forum.

When we consider the question of nuclear disarmament, the major efforts currently being exerted fall into three areas, namely the reduction of nuclear weapons, non-proliferation of those weapons, and a nuclear test ban. These three areas are interrelated, and a good balance among them will always have to be kept in mind. In all three areas, this year is expected to become a critical year. In the area of reduction of nuclear weapons, a START agreement is expected to be reached between the United States and the Soviet Union. In the area of non-proliferation, the fourth NPT review conference is scheduled to be held. In the area of a nuclear test ban, the protocols for the threshold test-ban and peaceful nuclear explosions Treaties are expected to be signed at the coming summit meeting between the United States and Soviet Union.

It is under such circumstances that the role and usefulness of the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, is being questioned. There is no doubt that, by resuming substantial work on nuclear test ban issues, the Conference will be able to make a valuable contribution in working out the best possible multilateral approach to this question, which would complement bilateral efforts being made between the United States and the Soviet Union.

It was from this viewpoint that my delegation has actively taken part in an effort to re-establish the ad hoc committee under agenda item 1. My predecessor, Ambassador Yamada, initiated a dialogue for this purpose when he was the President of the Conference for the month of March last year. In order to disentangle ourselves from the impasse of conflicting group positions, he consulted each delegation on an informal and individual basis.

As was announced by your predecessor, Ambassador Wagenmakers, at the

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presidency, you too kindly encouraged me to continue the efforts. I should like to take this opportunity to express sincere appreciation for the kind words of encouragement and support extended to myself and to my predecessor by a number of delegates at the sessions of this Conference.

It was only with such continued support and warm understanding by my colleages around this conference room that we began to break new ground in our common endeavour to disentangle ourselves from an impasse. I was extremely encouraged to see that, on the 14th of this month, you, Mr. President, successfully conducted a presidential consultation by inviting all the group co-ordinators for agenda item 1, and confirming that all groups agreed, without prejudice to their preferred draft mandates, to work towards consensus on the basis of the draft mandate embodied in document CD/863. China also stated that it supported this approach and expressed its readiness to participate in the work of the ad hoc committee when it is re-established. This new development indeed represents a major break-through, and confirms the readiness of the Conference to resume substantial work in the ad hoc committee under agenda item 1.

My delegation hopes that all groups and each delegation will continue to show as flexible and constructive an attitude as possible on this question, so that the Conference will be able to resume, as speedily as possible, substantial work on the agenda item. My delegation will spare no efforts in facilitating such a process by doing whatever is necessary, and in co-operation with all other delegations.

As for the handling of the work of the ad hoc committee to be established, my delegation wishes to stress the importance of avoiding a repetition of rhetorical and political rituals. The deliberation will have to be concrete and realistic. Japan also realizes that the peace and stability of the world will continue to be based on the balance of power and nuclear deterrence for the time being. As a member of the Western group of nations sharing common ideals and values, Japan feels that the only practical way to cessation of all nuclear tests lies in maintaining a balance of nuclear weapons at ever-lower levels, and gradually reducing all nuclear test explosions and bringing them under effective control. In other words, the approach to this question should be exclusively within the practical framework of a step-by-step approach.

Therefore, Japan welcomed and supported the joint statement made by the United States and the Soviet Union on 17 September 1987, in which a stage-by-stage approach to the nuclear test ban problem was announced. Japan strongly hopes that the United States and the Soviet Union, after the expected signature of the protocols for the threshold test-ban and peaceful nuclear explosions Treaties at the coming summit meeting, will proceed to the next stage of negotiations in this field, and that the bilateral United States-USSR negotiations and the multilateral deliberations in this Conference will be closely interrelated and reinforce each other.

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putting its conceptual design of a modern international seismic data exchange system through a testing operation. I note with great satisfaction that the second phase of the Group's second large-scale technical test (GSETT-2) has recently started, and hope that it will produce a number of successful and meaningful findings, which would contribute a great deal in formulating a reliable mechanism for detecting underground nuclear explosions. With a view to enhancing further the value of the GSE's work, I would like to call on those countries which have not yet done so to join this important experiment.

At the same time, we may be coming to a point where we should start thinking seriously about multiple facets of verification from a broader perspective and give proper guidance to the work of the GSE. I feel that by doing whatever is needed in our endeavour to work out a reliable and effective system of verification in the field of a nuclear test ban, the Conference on Disarmament will be carrying out the work most needed at this time of history full of promises and anxieties.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Japan for his statement, and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I have no other speaker inscribed for today. Does any other representative wish to take the floor?

I wish to recall that, as provided for in the timetable for meetings to be held during the present week, the Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space will meet this afternoon at 3 p.m. in this conference room.

I have no other business for today. I now intend to adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 29 March, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.